



**UNIVERSITÀ
DI PARMA**

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
DEGLI ALIMENTI E DEL FARMACO

PhD FOOD SCIENCES
mail: foodsciencephd@unipr.it

Ph.D. Course in Food Science

Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca in Scienze degli Alimenti

XXXVI Cycle (Nov 1st, 2020 - Oct 31st, 2023)
Statement of the Rights and Responsibilities of the PhD students
Carta del Dottorato



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1. Course description

The Doctoral (Ph.D.) Course in Food Science (Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca in Scienze degli Alimenti) is offered by the Department of Food and Drugs, University of Parma. The focus of the programme is the 3-years PhD research project (setting up, planning and performing research, then writing it up and presenting it), which leads to a thesis and associated publications. The research is carried out under the supervision of a member of the PhD Course Board.

The PhD Course in Food Science aims at organising the training of PhD candidates to become self-reliant, societal skilled researchers in the field of fundamental and applied research in food science. The PhD Course in Food Science is designed to cover all the steps along the food supply chain, “from the farm to the fork”, to address cutting-edge topics (i.e. local food systems, circular bioeconomy, human microbiome, and dietary patterns), and to provide the candidates with the knowledge required to tackle the next-to-come challenges in food quality and safety.

The research portfolio, based on a strong interdisciplinary environment, is mainly composed of the work performed within the Department of Food and Drugs in the following areas: i) Food microbiology; ii) Food technology and processing; iii) Human nutrition; iv) Plant production; v) Animal science; vi) Food chemistry and circular bioeconomy; vii) Agro-economy, consumer’s science, and food systems.

The Doctoral Board provides supervisors and offers lecturing and training in all the core disciplinary areas of the course, plus a range of interdisciplinary activities, shaping an highly transdisciplinary course.

The Ph.D. fellowship must be considered as an exclusive full-time employment. [Art.12 c.1 DM 45/2013].

This document contains information about the organization of the Course and represents an agreement among the parts involved; it assumes that all the parts are aware of Italian laws and of the internal rules about the Dottorato di ricerca (*Regolamento dei corsi per il conseguimento dei dottorati di ricerca* - www.unipr.it).



2. Definitions, rights and responsibilities

2.1. *Ph.D. Student (Studente di dottorato, Dottorando)*

- Ph.D. Students have access to education, supervision, and training. This includes access to the Supervisor's lab and research facilities at the Food and Drug Department or other Departments.
- Ph.D. Students have the right to receive a timely assessment of their progress and to be informed about the criteria upon which the assessment is based. Students should also be provided with opportunities to discuss their evaluation with their Supervisors. A reasonable warning should be provided in advance in case of potential dismissal based on failure in the academic progress.
- Ph.D. Students have the right to have their contribution to research outcomes fully acknowledged. The PhD student, the Supervisor and other relevant parties involved in the research activity must discuss extensively regarding the student's expectations and the nature of this acknowledgement. Ph.D. students and their Supervisors must follow the guidelines of the University of Parma about good research practice (<https://www.unipr.it/node/21810>).
- Ph.D. Students of each PhD course cycle must elect a representative who then takes part to the meetings of the Doctoral Board and advises the board about any organisational and teaching issue.
- Ph.D. Students must know and accept all the regulations of the University of Parma (<https://www.unipr.it/ateneo/albo-online/regolamenti>);

Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to stay informed about the requirements of their program and to dedicate appropriate effort and time to meet these requirements; in particular, they have the responsibility to fulfil their commitments and duties regarding research and complementary activities.

- Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to understand and fulfil their role in developing and maintaining a professional relationship with their Supervisor. This includes the responsibility for communicating regularly with him/her, maintaining a mutually agreed



schedule of meetings, and informing the supervisor about the status of their work, about any expected deviations from the agreed program and about any unanticipated absences.

- Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to acknowledge the contributions to their research outcome made by their supervisor and/or other colleagues. This includes maintaining confidentiality until results have been published. Any disclosure must be agreed with the Supervisor.
- The Ph.D. student has the responsibility to collect documents attesting their participation to complementary activities, and to report these activities to the Supervisor and the Doctoral Board.
- For five years after the end of the Course, the Dottore di Ricerca agrees to fill a questionnaire about his/her professional career (Almalaurea).

2.2. Supervisor (*Relatore di tesi*) and External Advisor (*Co-tutore*)

At the beginning of the Course, a Supervisor (*Relatore di tesi*) is assigned to each Ph.D. student by the Doctoral Board, appointed among the Board's members. If the PhD Student will perform a relevant part of their research activity out of the Supervisor's lab, an External Advisor (*Co-tutore*) will be selected. It is made clear that the Ph.D. Student must, in any case, refer to the Supervisor for what concerns his/her activity.

- The Supervisor has the responsibility to agree with the Ph.D. student upon a research plan, to follow their progress and to agree with them upon the schedule of any complementary activity.
- The Supervisor must provide all the requirements needed to perform a regular research work. This includes access to equipment, facilities, consumables, and documentation. In addition, the Supervisor must provide the PhD student with the opportunity to attend at least one National/International conference per year. This responsibility is shared with the External Advisor, in case of activities performed out of the Supervisor's Department.
- The Supervisor must encourage, and support student's international mobility and traineeship, for at least 3 months over the 3-year course. This includes providing contacts with experts located abroad, and scheduling with them research activities relevant for the student's PhD programme.



- The Supervisor reports to the Doctoral Board about the research progress and complementary activities carried out by the PhD student, to admit them to the following year of the Course and to the final examination.
- Before the end of the course, the Supervisor proposes to the Doctoral Board two external reviewers for the Ph.D. thesis pre-examination assessment.

When the collaboration between a PhD student and his/her supervisor is compromised, each of them can ask for a re-assignment to the Coordinator, who tries to settle the dispute. If, for any reason, the collaboration cannot be restored, the Coordinator asks the PhD student and the Supervisor to report their points of view in written documents and presents these reports to the Doctoral Board. The Board can re-assign the PhD student to another Supervisor or take any different decision; the decision taken by the Doctoral Board is considered to be final.

2.3. Doctoral Board (Collegio dei Docenti)

The Doctoral Board takes care of:

- assigning a Supervisor to each PhD student;
- defining the overall requirements of research work and complementary activity;
- approving, at the end of every academic year, the PhD student's statement of research, admitting them to the next year in case of a positive response;
- approving, at the end of the last academic year, the PhD student's statement of research, admitting them to the final evaluation in case of a positive response;
- assigning the pre-examination external reviewers, as well as the additional reviewers in case of Doctor Europaeus title award;
- proposing the *Viva Voce* Committee members to the Rector of the University of Parma (Magnifico Rettore).

The members of Doctoral Board must participate to formative and complementary activities, teaching, courses and seminars. They must produce relevant research results in the scientific fields covered by the PhD course, and fulfil any additional requirement set by the Italian Ministry of University and Research, as well as by the University of Parma.



The members of the Doctoral Board are renewed every year, and the list is published on the Course website.

2.4. Chair of the Doctoral Board (*Coordinatore del Dottorato di Ricerca*)

The Chair of the Course

- updates the composition of the Doctoral Board and summons its meetings;
- is responsible for the accreditation process of each PhD cycle;
- is responsible for the set up and organisation of the annual application procedure;
- defines, manages, and supervises the capacity building activity program;
- authorizes secondments of PhD students abroad up to 6 months. For longer mobility stays, the Doctoral Board's approval is required;
- authorizes any teaching task carried out by the PhD students;
- authorizes PhD candidates to officially submit their thesis;
- engages with industries and institutions in support of PhD students' activities and post-doctoral placement.

For temporary vacation, this role may be assigned to a Vice-Chair, if any.



3. Requirements of the Course

3.1 Course organization

The Course lasts a minimum of three years. It requires accomplishment of an original research work, as well as the fulfilment of a complementary capacity building program. Considering that in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), 60 ECTS credits are the equivalent of a full year of study or work, PhD students are required to obtain 180 ECTS.

Following the Doctoral Board's resolution (established on September 24th, 2019), it has been established that 1 ECTS credit (briefly, ECTS) can be achieved attending 6 hours lecture or 1-day National/International Schools/Workshops. For research activity, one ECTS corresponds to 25 hours work (approximately 6 ECTS per month of full-time work).

PhD students are asked to undertake an original research project, promoted by their Supervisor, and attested by publication on peer-reviewed scientific journals. In addition, they are asked to attend academic activities for a total of 24 ECTS in three years. Courses are taught in English, and tailored for increasing the disciplinary knowledge and interdisciplinary skills at post-graduate and young professional level. In addition, conferences, workshops, and PhD Schools attendance is strongly promoted. The educational activity must be planned by each candidate with her/his supervisor, and approved by the PhD Course Board before the annual evaluation, and the admission to the next year of the Programme or to the final exam. Under specific agreements between University of Parma and a partner University, it is possible to follow a joint PhD Program.

At the end of each academic year, the PhD student must submit a report of the research and academic activities to the Chair of the Doctoral Board, following the format provided by the university office. The report must be duly signed by the supervisor. The Chair will present the report to the Doctoral Board for approval and admission of the candidate to the next year or to the final examination.



3.2. Research work, secondment and tutoring activity

Upon enrolment, and following the format provided by the Board, each PhD student submits to the Chair a research plan, duly signed by their Supervisor. The research plan will include:

- a title;
- a brief description of the state of the art;
- the specific objectives and methodologies of the project;
- expected results, phases and milestones.

At the annual PhD Day (approx. scheduled in November each year), the PhD students will deliver a talk on their work. The PhD Day must be attended by all the PhD students as well as by the Doctoral Board members. Detailed instruction and agenda will be provided by the Chair each year, in due advance.

The PhD student must interact with their supervisor to assess research progress, analyse weaknesses and pitfalls, and to define a possible contingency plan. At the end of each academic year, the PhD student submit a statement of research, briefly describing the progress and the achievements. The Doctoral Board will evaluate the report for admittance to the next year or to the final exam. The candidate is required to submit at least three original papers (not review papers) on International ISI-journals by the end of the three years. Published papers, as well as accepted or submitted manuscripts are considered, with no distinction about first authorship and co-authorship. In the event the candidate does not meet the requirements for proved and unavoidable reasons, the Doctoral Board has the right to admit him/her nonetheless to the final exam.

An international secondment in a distinguished external institution, for at least 3 months and up to 18 months, is strongly encouraged. PhD student's mobility can be supported by the Overworld mobility program, Erasmus program or other programs organized by the University. International secondments must be approved by the Chair or, for periods longer than 6 months, by the Doctoral Board, and countersigned by the Head of the Department.

According to the University of Parma regulatory framework, PhD students must ask the Chair for formal authorization to perform complementary teaching in institutional courses, up to 40 hours per year. These activities do not imply any obligation for the University.



3.3. Educational and training activities

Educational and training activities attended by PhD students during the three years of the Programme can be classified into disciplinary, interdisciplinary and research-related activities.

The candidates must collect a total of 24 ECTS in three years, according to the following scheme:

ACTIVITIES	ECTS in 3 years	DESCRIPTION
Institutional activities	≥ 6	Courses and seminars specifically activated for the PhD course, attended by the candidate during the current year
Interdisciplinary activities	≥ 4	Soft skills, (i.e. public speaking, intellectual properties, ethics in science)
Research-related activities	≤ 10	Workshop, summer or winter schools, PhD schools, study abroad period, etc... attended by the candidate during the current year
Other activities	≤ 2	Complementary didactic activities carried out by the candidate within courses of the University of Parma (teaching hours: max 40), i.e. class exercises, laboratories assistance, other...

Significant deviations from this plan, agreed in advance by the PhD student and her/his Supervisor, have to be approved by the Doctoral Board.

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses

Every academic year, short courses on disciplinary or interdisciplinary topics, specifically designed for the PhD students in Food Science, are offered by the Doctoral Board members as well as by external experts. The courses are approved by the Doctoral Board and published on the website. In addition, the PhD School in Biological, Drug and Food Sciences and other Institutions at the University of Parma, in particular the School of Advanced Studies on Food and Nutrition of the University, may offer other courses, including interdisciplinary ones, that can be included in the student's program as well.



PhD students are also encouraged to attend other courses that can improve their scientific and technical growth. Courses from post-graduate curricula, and in some cases also from undergraduate ones, can concur to ECTS accumulation for educational activities. On a case-by-case base, the suitable number of ECTS will be assigned by the Doctoral Board based on supervisor's suggestion and considering the duration of the course, its level, and the congruity with the PhD programme in Food Science.

3.4 Final commitment

At the end of the third year, the PhD candidate submits to their Supervisor and to the Doctoral Board a statement of research describing:

- the research work performed and the main results achieved;
- the complementary activities performed and attended;
- a list of publications, congress reports and acknowledgments.

The PhD candidate prepares an original thesis based on the results of their research work. The thesis must be written in English. Within the thesis, any contribution provided by the supervisor as well as by other colleagues must be properly acknowledged. Any kind of plagiarism must be avoided. While avoiding copyright infringements in reproducing published work, the PhD candidate can include work and results that have been previously published, provided that she/he appears as a co-author and that the publication is properly referenced.

3.5 Course evaluation

At the end of the Course, the PhD candidate must fill in an anonymous assessment of the PhD program. After the end, a questionnaire on professional career will be sent to the admin office of the University of Parma (Ufficio Dottorato) for 5 years after their title achievement.

3.6 Title award

On the basis of the statement of research submitted by the PhD candidate, and following the supervisor's advise, the Doctoral Board admits the PhD candidate to the final exam. The thesis must undergo a pre-examination assessment by two external reviewers. Upon written evaluation, the reviewers may admit the candidate to the Viva Voce exam, with no or minor amendment of the thesis, or may suggest major revision allowing a postponement of up to 6 months for integrations or amendments. In the last case, the thesis must be reassessed by the reviewers



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before the final exam. A public Viva Voce exam is carried out in front of a Committee appointed as per University rules. A minimum of three academic members must be appointed in the Viva Voce committee. Additional experts from the industry may be appointed based on their acknowledged scientific profile. The Viva Voce exam is carried out in English. At the end of the Viva Voce exam, the PhD title can be conferred or not. (See Art. 8 c. 6 DM 45/2013).

Under application by the PhD candidate, and favourable opinion by the Doctoral Board, the University of Parma can award an additional Certification of “Doctor Europaeus”, as defined by the European University Association, when (see <https://www.unipr.it/node/21035>): 1) the PhD thesis work includes a secondment of at least three months in an EU Country; 2) the PhD student presents two positive evaluations by academics from two EU Countries different from each other and from Italy; 3) the Committee for the final evaluation includes at least one member from an EU Country different from Italy.



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4. Agreement

We, the undersigned, hereby declare to accept what stated in the document "Statement of the Rights and Responsibilities of PhD Students" for the PhD Course in Food Science - XXXVI cycle.

The PhD Student,

Email

Date:

Signature

The Supervisor,

Date:

Signature

The Chair,

Date:

Signature

The Head of the Department of Food and Drug

Date:

Signature